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NOTES AND ABSTRACTS

ANTHROPOLOGY—PSYCHOLOGY—LEGAL-MEDICINE

Summary of Present State Laws in United States Re Certification of Consulting Psychologists.—1. Six states now have laws on their statute books, permitting requiring psychologists or clinical psychologists to determine the mental status and condition of feeble-minded, epileptic, and insane persons, for purposes of giving testimony in courts of law, committing to appropriate institutions, or authorizing sterilization.

2. In four of the states (New York, Missouri, Kansas, Illinois), the law relates to the determination of mental deficiency only.

3. In two of these states (Wisconsin and California) mental deficiency and epilepsy are mentioned. (It should be added that Dr. Woods writes that she believes the law in Wisconsin would be interpreted to mean that only determination of mental deficiency pertains to the function of the psychologist).

4. In one state (California) the law relates to determination of the mental status of feeble-minded, epileptic, and "persons" afflicted with incurable chronic mania or dementia.

5. The requirements of these laws have close bearing on the professional training of those qualifying as psychologists. To be able to make a diagnosis of mental deficiency, epilepsy, "chronic mania or dementia" it is absolutely necessary to have knowledge of all mental disorders; for it is obvious that no one can make a diagnosis of any of these conditions, who is unable to differentiate among mental states which resemble each other in certain features, but which are essentially different in origin, outcome and treatment. Any program of professional preparation which falls short of the requirements of existing statutes will, thus, result in the rendition of inefficient service.

6. Nevertheless, only three states (Wisconsin, California and New York) define the qualifications in respect to training of persons functioning under the title psychologists. California designates the Ph. D. degree in psychology; New York specifies two full years of post-graduate study in psychology, at an incorporated college or university.

7. The qualifications of persons other than psychologists, who are authorized under the laws to determine mental deficiency, either in coöperation with the psychologists or independently, are far from satisfactory. In some of the states, superintendents of the poor and other persons without specified technical training of any kind may commit alleged feeble-minded persons. Where physicians are empowered to determine mental deficiency, the specified requirement usually is simply graduation from a recognized medical school, with experience in general practice. This Committee has scrutinized the curricula of various first-class and second-class medical schools, and finds nothing to justify the assumption that graduates of them have technical knowledge of mental deficiency, or of the methods of determining mental status in alleged mentally defective persons. A few medical schools of Class A offer a few weeks of instruction which includes reference to mental deficiency, but such lectures are, with one or two exceptions, optional with medical students. There is no reason to suppose that graduates of medical schools, who have no further tech-

nical training, are qualified to determine the mental condition of alleged mentally deficient persons.

8. In several states where laws authorizing psychologists to determine mental status have not been passed, psychologists have, nevertheless, been summoned to give expert testimony in courts, concerning the mental condition of accused persons, and of others engaged in litigation.—LETA S. HOLLINGSWORTH, Chairman, Section on Clinical Psychology of the American Psychological Association.

Criteria for Determining Anatomical and Physiological Ages.—In this series of investigations on criteria of anatomical and physiological ages, the writer has presented new data in the form of a graduated series of roentgenograms of the carpal and metacarpal bones of infants and school children, discovering marked differences among boys and girls and between boys and girls of the same age. For boys the coefficient is higher between the exposed area of carpal bones and height (.879) than for girls (.726) and boys also have higher coefficient of variability (29.94) by the Pearsonian coefficient than girls (12.698). It has been discovered that twins of the same sex may differ greatly in anatomical ages.

Larger boys and girls mature physiologically as a rule earlier than small ones, and early maturity is followed as a rule by a rapid cessation of growth in stature.

Physiological age has a direct bearing on physical training, social adjustment, industrial work, and pedagogical advancement. Another experimental study just completed shows that the mental age of the individual bears a direct relationship to the physiological age as indicated by height and weight. The results show that at each chronological age the physiologically accelerated boys and girls have a higher mental age than those of the average or below the average physiological age. The girls, when classified on this basis, show a higher mental age for a given chronological age than do the boys. Girls are on the average mentally older than boys.—BIRD T. BALDWIN. Abstract of paper presented before the American Psychological Association, Chicago, Dec., 1920.

COURTS—LAWS

On the Age Limit in the Juvenile Court.—There are always two ways of doing a thing. One is to anticipate it, study it, prepare to meet it and develop whatever is good in it. Another, and perhaps more often adopted, is to ignore its presence until its occurrence and then in excitement, hurry and negligently, because unprepared, find many worries, difficulties and perhaps disaster as a result of our inattention. Which of those are we, who are greatly interested, taking with regard to the proposal to increase the age limit of the jurisdiction of the Children's Court? We all know that it will come up, and come up shortly, for already at the last Legislature more than one bill was introduced looking to that end. Knowing it is coming, how shall we act? Let a bill be introduced and then all, at sixes and sevens, rush off to Albany in different camps preparing for and against the measure? Is it not better for all those who are concerned or may be affected to come together, hear both sides of the question, for there are two sides, and wisely determine the best course and how to meet it? There are many sides to be considered.